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SUBJECT: SRSG EIDE BRIEFS THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON  
AFGHANISTAN, UNAMA

11. (U) Summary: On March 20, SRSG Kai Eide updated the Security Council on latest developments in Afghanistan and implementation of UNAMA's mandate. In contrast to the uniformly somber report on Afghanistan issued by the Secretary-General a week earlier, Eide began by detailing recent improvements that lay the groundwork for potential progress in governance, intra-government cooperation, police and agricultural reform, and the projected decline of poppy production country-wide. Eide concluded by outlining the many challenges in Afghanistan, especially the deterioration of the security situation. Council members, the PermRep of Afghanistan and ten other key regional and donor countries spoke following Eide's intervention. There was broad consensus regarding the importance of elections and support for the upcoming Ministerial-level conferences, as well as concern over the security situation and humanitarian/human rights challenges, especially the targeting of women and girls. In stark contrast to previous meetings, Russia did not criticize ISAF, nor did it focus on civilian casualties. This left Libya as the only Council member harshly critical of ISAF and the international community's efforts in Afghanistan. Interventions from regional countries were milder than in the past - notably, Iran did not criticize the presence of international troops, and Pakistan's intervention underscored the importance of its relationship with Afghanistan. India hewed to its classic statement of implicitly criticizing Pakistan and vowing that India would not be deterred from its support of Afghanistan. End summary.

EIDE'S INTERVENTION

12. (U) Eide began by noting that the stage is set for progress to be made, especially with regard to the Afghan government. "After all the changes that have taken place over the last six months, the Afghan government is today better and more competent than ever before," he said. Eide added that cooperation within the government has improved, economic ministries work together in a more coherent way, and there is potential for real successes in the police, agriculture and private development sectors. He also noted that poppy cultivation has decreased, which has the potential of fostering a significant decline in production across the country. Turning to the challenges facing Afghanistan, Eide said the security situation has deteriorated and Afghanistan's political parties must reach a consensus that ensures the "continued legitimacy and strength of Afghanistan's institutions until the next presidential inauguration." On civilian casualties, Eide said ISAF is addressing this issue, although he pointedly noted that military behavior "does not adequately respect Afghan cultural sensitivities."

13. (U) Turning to coordination issues, Eide said political coordination has improved, but donor coordination still lags. He criticized several practices (which he also raised with Ambassador Rice in reftel). Eide urged that donor countries move away from reliance on "overpaid and under qualified" contractors, and he criticized the narrow provincial focus of many donors that resulted in "donor generated fragmentation

of Afghanistan." He said the international military forces, including PRTs, should channel development resources through civilian institutions, preferably Afghan, rather than doing development work themselves. Eide said UNAMA was also particularly focused on challenges to the rights of women in Afghan society as well as freedom of expression. He ended his intervention with a plea for greater regional cooperation and for addressing reconciliation "in a way that projects strength and conviction and not weakness and doubt."

#### AFGHANISTAN,S INTEVENTION

¶4. (U) In his intervention before the Council, Afghanistan PermRep Zahir Tanin stressed the lack of support the Taliban and al Qaida have within the population of Afghanistan. He noted that Afghanistan,s most important accomplishments - constitution, elections, improvements in the Afghan National Army, infrastructure, education and health - have come in large part because of sustained international attention. Those areas that still lag - the Afghan National Police, governance, corruption and judicial reform - have not received the same amount of international attention. Moving forward, he urged that attention be paid to the following issues: free, fair and transparent elections in August as well as Afghan government ownership of economic development, military operations, and national reconciliation. He applauded the regional focus of the upcoming Ministerial-level conferences.

#### COUNCIL MEMBERS, KEY REGIONAL AND DONOR COUNTRIES SPEAK

¶5. (U) All Council members expressed support for Eide and

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UNAMA, and supported a 12-month extension of UNAMA,s mandate. (Note: The draft resolution to extend the mandate is scheduled for adoption on Monday, March 23. End note) Council members all voiced concern at the deterioration of the security situation and a rise in attacks by Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other terrorist organizations. Russia expressed the view that in certain areas of Afghanistan terrorist organizations control entire regions, which greatly destabilizes and hinders the national political and socio-economic development process. Several members (Japan, Burkina Faso, China, France, and the US) stated the need to reform the national police force in order to reform fully the national security sector. Many Council members applauded the development of the Afghan army and the integration of ISAF alongside the Afghan army. The US and the UK both applauded the efforts to decrease the production of poppies and said the prognosis for 2009 had improved.

¶6. (U) Council members voiced a deep concern for the humanitarian issues in Afghanistan, particularly the targeting of women and girls, the direct targeting of schools, and the increase in civilian casualties. Particular emphasis was given to the direct targeting of children and schools. Austria, Mexico and Costa Rica all focused on the threat posed by anti-government forces to civilian populations, including the direct targeting of girls at schools and the forced recruitment by the Taliban of children into militant groups. All members of the Security Council expressed a deep concern for civilian casualties, with the US and the UK expressing a profound regret for any loss of life.

On elections, Council members commended the Afghani government for its efforts to organize the upcoming elections. The US and the UK in particular welcomed the change in date of the elections to August 20 to ensure that more Afghan citizens would be allowed to participate. Two members (Japan and Turkey) pledged more monetary and/or security assistance to the elections in order to ensure a smooth transition to a new government.

¶7. (U) Russia,s intervention was significantly more moderate than in the past. It expressed concern over civilian casualties, but did not mention ISAF, and it focused more on

governance and development issues. Russia specifically noted that it was allowing ISAF to use its territory for transport, as long as the materials were non-military. Russia also reiterated its position that any efforts towards national reconciliation must be implemented in strict accordance with UNSCR 1267, and said that any attempt to involve terrorists in reconciliation will be fraught with danger. Russia,s marked change in tone left Libya as the only discordant note.

The Libyan PermRep declared that most of the problems in Afghanistan were the fault of the international community. He stated that the international community neglected Afghanistan after the Cold War and had only given it due attention in the past seven years. He said an end to corruption and extremism would be the only way to meet basic economic needs. He was critical of international forces in Afghanistan and the increase in civilian casualties, and said military actions did not help establish peace and security but only helped the anti-government forces. The Libyan PR ended his intervention by criticizing the "dangerous state of neglect" of prisons and detention facilities in Afghanistan.

18. (U) Following Council interventions, donor and regional countries spoke (Canada, Czech Republic on behalf of the EU, Norway, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, India, Australia, Iran and Pakistan). Donor countries noted their efforts in Afghanistan and voiced a willingness to be coordinated. Interventions from regional countries were milder than in the past - notably, Iran did not criticize the presence of international troops, and Pakistan,s intervention underscored the importance of its relationship with Afghanistan. Iran also warned against "incorporating terrorist elements into the political structure of Afghanistan" and emphasized that national reconciliation should be led by the Afghan government with full respect and adherence to the Afghan constitution. India echoed Iran,s statements on reconciliation. Its statement reprised themes from its previous interventions: implicitly criticizing Pakistan and vowing that India would not be deterred from its support of Afghanistan. Pakistan,s PR proclaimed that Pakistan,s territory would not be used for terrorism, and said a crucial security risk was the Afghan refugee population in Pakistan. He said the refugees in Pakistan existed "in appalling conditions" although he did not give the impression that Pakistan had any obligation in this regard. He emphasized the importance of Pakistan,s relationship with Afghanistan, and said an improved in the situation in Afghanistan would benefit Pakistan the most. He welcomed the upcoming Ministerial-level conferences in Moscow, The Hague and Trieste.

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